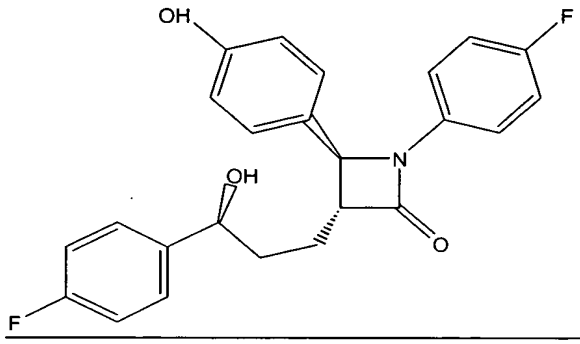
CLAIM AMENDMENTS

Therefore, we claim:

1. (Currently Amended) A composition comprising:

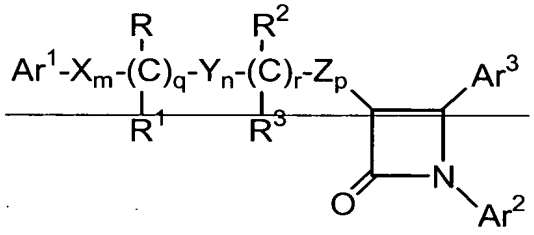
(a) at least one of nicotinic acid or derivatives thereof; and

(b) ~~at least one~~ a sterol absorption inhibitor represented by Formula (II):



(II)

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or solvate thereof



~~(I)~~

~~or isomers thereof, or pharmaceutically acceptable salts or solvates of the compounds of Formula (I) or of the isomers thereof, or prodrugs of the compounds of Formula (I) or of the isomers, salts or solvates thereof, wherein in Formula (I) above:~~

~~Ar^1 and Ar^2 are independently selected from the group consisting of aryl and R^4 substituted aryl;~~

~~Ar^3 is aryl or R^5 substituted aryl;~~

~~X, Y and Z are independently selected from the group consisting of~~

~~$-CH_2-$, -CH(lower alkyl)- and -C(dilower alkyl)-;~~

~~R and R^2 are independently selected from the group consisting of $-OR^6$, $-O(CO)R^6$, $-O(CO)OR^9$ and $-O(CO)NR^6R^7$;~~

~~R^1 and R^3 are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, lower alkyl and aryl;~~

~~q is 0 or 1;~~

~~r is 0 or 1;~~

~~m, n and p are independently selected from 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4; provided that at least one of q and r is 1, and the sum of m, n, p, q and r is 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6; and provided that when p is 0 and r is 1, the sum of m, q and n is 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5;~~

~~R^4 is 1-5 substituents independently selected from the group consisting of lower alkyl, $-OR^6$, $-O(CO)R^6$, $-O(CO)OR^9$, $-O(CH_2)_{1-5}OR^6$, $-O(CO)NR^6R^7$, $-NR^6R^7$, $-NR^6(CO)R^7$, $-NR^6(CO)OR^9$, $-NR^6(CO)NR^7R^8$, $-NR^6SO_2R^9$, $-COOR^6$, $-CONR^6R^7$, $-COR^6$, $-SO_2NR^6R^7$, $S(O)_{0-2}R^9$, $-O(CH_2)_{1-10}-COOR^6$, $-O(CH_2)_{1-10}CONR^6R^7$, -(lower alkylene)$COOR^6$, $-CH=CH-COOR^6$, $-CF_3$, -CN, $-NO_2$ and halogen;~~

~~R^5 is 1-5 substituents independently selected from the group consisting of $-OR^6$, $-O(CO)R^6$, $-O(CO)OR^9$, $-O(CH_2)_{1-5}OR^6$, $-O(CO)NR^6R^7$, $-NR^6R^7$, $-NR^6(CO)R^7$, $-NR^6(CO)OR^9$, $-NR^6(CO)NR^7R^8$, $-NR^6SO_2R^9$, $-COOR^6$, $-CONR^6R^7$, $-COR^6$, $-SO_2NR^6R^7$, $S(O)_{0-2}R^9$, $-O(CH_2)_{1-10}-COOR^6$, $-O(CH_2)_{1-10}CONR^6R^7$, -(lower alkylene)$COOR^6$ and $-CH=CH-COOR^6$;~~

~~R^6, R^7 and R^8 are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, lower alkyl, aryl and aryl-substituted lower alkyl; and~~

~~R^9 is lower alkyl, aryl or aryl-substituted lower alkyl~~.

2. (Original) The composition according to claim 1, wherein the at least one of nicotinic acid or derivatives thereof is selected from the group

consisting of nicotinic acid, niceritrol, nicofuranose, acipimox and mixtures thereof.

3. (Original) The composition according to claim 2, wherein the at least one of nicotinic acid or derivatives thereof is nicotinic acid.

4. (Original) The composition according to claim 1, wherein the at least one of nicotinic acid or derivatives thereof is administered to a mammal in an amount ranging from about 500 to about 10,000 milligrams of nicotinic acid or derivatives thereof per day.

5. (Cancel).

6. (Currently Amended) The composition according to claim 1, wherein the ~~at least one~~ sterol absorption inhibitor is administered to a mammal in an amount ranging from about 0.1 to about 1000 milligrams of sterol absorption inhibitor per day.

7. (Original) The composition according to claim 1, further comprising at least one cholesterol biosynthesis inhibitor.

8. (Original) The composition according to claim 7, wherein the at least one cholesterol biosynthesis inhibitor comprises at least one HMG CoA reductase inhibitor.

9. (Original) The composition according to claim 8, wherein the at least one HMG CoA reductase inhibitor is selected from the group consisting of lovastatin, pravastatin, fluvastatin, simvastatin, atorvastatin, cerivastatin and mixtures thereof.

10. (Original) The composition according to claim 9, wherein the at least one HMG CoA reductase inhibitor is simvastatin.

11. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 1, further comprising at least one PPAR receptor activator.

12. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 11, wherein the PPAR receptor activator is at least one fibric acid derivative is selected from the group consisting of fenofibrate, clofibrate, gemfibrozil, ciprofibrate, bezafibrate, clinofibrate, binifibrate, lifibrol and mixtures thereof.

13. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 12, wherein the at least one fibric acid derivative is fenofibrate.

14. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 1, further comprising at least one bile acid sequestrant.

15. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 14, wherein the at least one bile acid sequestrant is selected from the group consisting of cholestyramine and colestipol.

16. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 1, further comprising at least one AcylCoA:Cholesterol *O*-acyltransferase Inhibitor.

17. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 1, further comprising probucol or derivatives thereof.

18. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 1, further comprising at least one low-density lipoprotein receptor activator.

19. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 1, further comprising at least one Omega 3 fatty acid.

20. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 1, further comprising at least one natural water soluble fiber.

21. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 1, further comprising at least one of plant sterols, plant stanols or fatty acid esters of plant stanols.

22. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 1, further comprising at least one antioxidant or vitamin.

23. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 1, further comprising at least one hormone replacement therapy composition.

24. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 1, further comprising at least one obesity control medication.

25. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 1, further comprising at least one blood modifier different from the compound of Formula (I).

26. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 1, further comprising at least one cardiovascular agent different from the compound of Formula I.

27. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 1, further comprising at least one antidiabetic medication.

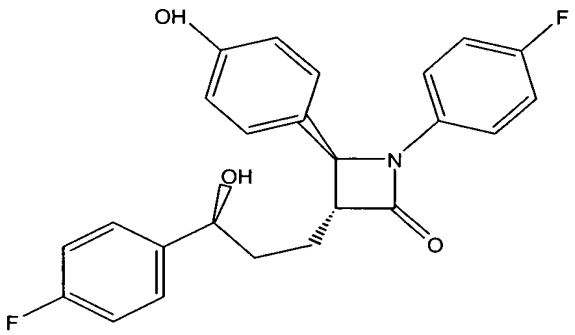
28. (Original) A pharmaceutical composition for the treatment or prevention of a vascular condition, diabetes, obesity or lowering a concentration of a sterol in plasma of a mammal, comprising a therapeutically effective amount of the composition of claim 1 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

29. (Original) A method of treating or preventing a vascular condition, diabetes, obesity or lowering a concentration of a sterol in plasma of a mammal, comprising the step of administering to a mammal in need of such treatment an effective amount of the composition of claim 1.

30. (Original) The method according to claim 29, wherein the vascular condition is hyperlipidemia.

31. (Cancel).

32. (Currently Amended) A therapeutic combination comprising: (a) a first amount of at least one of nicotinic acid or derivatives thereof; and (b) a second amount of a compound represented by Formula (II) below:



(II)

or pharmaceutically acceptable salt or solvate thereof, ~~or prodrug of the compound of Formula (II) or of the salt or solvate thereof,~~ wherein the first amount and the second amount together comprise a therapeutically effective amount for the treatment or prevention of a vascular condition, diabetes, obesity or lowering a concentration of a sterol in plasma of a mammal.

33 – 81. (Cancel)